

Minutes
Regular meeting of the City of Reading Planning Commission
September 24, 2013 at 7:00 pm

Members present:

Ermete J. Raffaelli, Chairman
Brian J. Burket, Vice Chairman
Michael E. Lauter, Secretary

Staff present:

Andrew W. Miller, Planning Office

Others present:

Kenneth V. Farrall, CMC Engineering
Tod W. Bettenhausen, Eagle River Consulting Inc.
Christopher H. Schubert, Riley Riper Hollin & Colagreco PC
Kent D. Morey, SSM Group Inc.
Dennis C. Kohl, Carpenter Technology Corporation
Casimir Guzowski, Kutztown University
David S. Johnson, Reading Eagle Company

Chairman Raffaelli called the September meeting to order, and asked for acceptance of the agenda. Mr. Burket moved to accept the September 24th agenda as presented. Mr. Lauter seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to accept the September agenda.

Subdivision and Land Development:

RDG North Reading Cell Site – final land development plan [0:00.35]

Mr. Schubert reported that they've received zoning approval and, more-recently, the Planning Office's review letter. Mr. Farrall described a 110-foot monopole, with a 5-foot lightning rod, and an equipment shelter at the corner of North 6th and Spring Streets. He said they'd be utilizing an existing curb cut, and building at the edge of Yeager Supply's parking lot. A fenced-in compound, within and in addition to Yeager Supply's existing fence, will secure the site. He intended to fully comply with the review letter comments, having submitted to the Berks County Conservation District earlier that day, and intending to seek a 'minimum-use' driveway permit from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. He estimated its eventual use at once every four to six weeks by a service technician. He characterized the rest of the issues as notational corrections. Mr. Miller agreed with that assessment of his review, and asked if they'd yet received a County Planning Commission review. Mr. Farrall said not. Asked about one of the setback lines depicted, Mr. Farrall explained that it represented a ratio (half the tower height) required by the Zoning Ordinance but since varied. He said the original plan proposed a site nearer to the intersection, but the Zoning Hearing Board preferred the greater separation from the homes on the western side of North 6th Street. Mr. Miller asked about the potential for additional tenants and equipment shelters. Mr. Farrall said the tower provides for additional carriers to 'co-locate', as the Zoning Ordinance encourages, which would mean additional sheds or cabinets. He felt the additional area provided within their fenced compound would be sufficient to absorb that potential. Asked if those leases were already arranged, Mr. Farrall answered that Verizon Wireless has 'master leases' with all the carriers. He confirmed that the curvilinear driveway path was a topographical consideration, meant to minimize the earth disturbance. Mr. Miller asked if they had researched a 1997 subdivision plan (Reading Transfer Properties Inc.) that he had referenced in his review letter, and its implications for the driveway/access arrangements. Mr. Farrall explained that they had no need for the other driveway, to the east, nor for any permissions from Norfolk Southern Corporation. Asked about potential issues with the overhead electric transmission lines, Mr. Farrall said there were none, either in terms of safety of interference, which they had more-fully explained in their testimony to the Hearing Board. Mr. Miller asked why construction details for the pole foundation weren't included with the many others in the plan set. Mr. Farrall said that, following plan approval, the tower is *ordered*, a foundation designed per the geotechnical report, and specifications included with the construction documents. He predicted a 'mat and pier' foundation, due to the shallow depth to the bedrock, as opposed to drilled caissons. He assured that this more-horizontal support would still fit within the perimeter of their compound. He added that no improvements would extend beyond their facility, including the grounding equipment, except for connections to the electric and communication utilities.

Mr. Raffaelli asked about sight lines to neighboring properties. Mr. Farrall referred to photo simulations prepared for the zoning hearings, and the limits of that perspective on North 6th Street. Mr. Lauter, recalled a

concern raised at the September 2012 meeting regarding the current status of a driveway/easement, across Norfolk Southern's property for Reading Transfer Properties. Mr. Schubert they were no longer a tenant and, and claimed he had researched the aforementioned subdivision and its terms. He said that while Yeager Supply may continue to use the access, Verizon Wireless would not rely on it given the 30-day 'get-out clause' attached to it. He had assumed it was provided for a former gas station. He added that if Yeager Supply ever needed the alternate access, their planned driveway could be extended to serve the purpose. Locations of the access gates, and their distance from the street were briefly discussed. Mr. Farrall referred to a letter submitted requesting waivers from the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance: from the preliminary planning step and stormwater planning. Mr. Miller didn't consider the former applicable once it was accepted as a final plan, and deferred to the City Engineer on the latter. Asked about landscaping, Mr. Schubert said they weren't proposing any, recalling the residents and Hearing Board preferring the visibility for safety and security reasons. Mr. Lauter suggested some improvement and definition at the driveway entrance. Mr. Schubert offered to discuss it with the landowner, and the Commission members discussed preferences. He said they'd develop something with the revised plan submission, and asked about the 'next steps'. Mr. Miller reiterated the legal and technical reasons for delaying a vote: the County Planning review, and erosion control and driveway plan approvals. Mr. Schubert asked if there'd be any other changes sought for the plan itself. Mr. Miller complimented their complete and thorough first effort, and believed the zoning issues to have been fully resolved. Asked about other sites considered, Mr. Schubert said they had first considered co-location on other existing towers, describing sites at 1621 North 5th Street and 1801 North 5th Street. He said the radio-frequency engineering determined a very limited range; the present site and another on Norfolk Southern's property, but none any further south. He asked about the local process following a plan approval. Mr. Miller said there wouldn't be any construction before recording, though they could file construction documents for building permits in the meantime. He offered the possibility of meeting with all the trade officials simultaneously, any Thursday morning, to discuss issues that may be unique to their project.

Mr. Burket moved to table the final plan, pending to the County Conservation District, City Public Works and County Planning reviews, and resolution of the City Planning review comments. Mr. Lauter seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to table the 'RDG North Reading Cell Site' final plan

New Wire Cleaning Line Building 154 (Carpenter) – final land development plan [0:35.41]

Mr. Morey recalled the presentation at the June 25th meeting, and again described the project's orientation within the 'west shore' part of Carpenter Technology Corporation's plant. He said it would relocate the coil-cleaning operation from Building 48, and update a process dating from the 1940s. He said a canopy between the two buildings would allow a sheltered transfer of the material. The freed space would allow for better circulation within Building 48. He said there would be no change in employment, currently at five per shift. He said they've addressed the Public Works comments, and gained approval from the County Conservation District. Mr. Miller asked about a letter to be provided explaining the delay in a pending air-quality permit. Mr. Morey claimed to have sent the letter by facsimile, after another mailed directly from Carpenter. He showed a note on the revised plan summarizing the issue, starting with their submission in February. Mr. Miller read it, and indicated his amenability to a conditional approval, noting that the matter wouldn't affect the 'land development' issues. Mr. Morey offered signed plan sets, and promised a copy of the letter with the plan recording.

Mr. Lauter moved to approve the final plan for Carpenter's new wire-cleaning facility, conditioned on the satisfaction of the latest Planning Office review. Mr. Burket seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to approve the 'New Wire Cleaning Line Building 154' final plan.

Resolution #29-2013

Other business:

review the draft August 27, 2013 meeting minutes [0:44.36]

Mr. Lauter moved to accept the August meeting minutes, as presented. Mr. Burket seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to accept the August 27th meeting minutes.

Resolution #30-2013

Mr. Lauter moved to adjourn the September meeting. Mr. Burket seconded. And the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the September 24th meeting. – 7:47p